

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Colton Herta

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Josef Newgarden has joined us, driving the No. 2 Hitachi Team Penske Chevrolet. Looking for a big weekend back in California. Weird to be here in June. Considering how hot it is in the Midwest, we'll take it.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, super nice. Great change of pace from the Midwest, East Coast. It's beautiful out here. I think everyone is a fan of coming out to Monterey, this part of the country. Excited to be here.

The car felt pretty good in the first session. Always happy to start out with a good feeling. I thought we had that right away. As evidenced by Scott, too, I think our cars looked pretty solid.

Really pleased just to get going.

THE MODERATOR: What did you learn in the practice session?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We kind of took it easy on our program, tried to limit some of the miles on the tires just given the nature of this weekend. You don't have a ton of tires to work with. We want to make sure we are conservative for tomorrow.

I mean, I think the good thing we learned was that our car was in a nice window right away. That's always a great thing to find out when you roll off. I was pretty happy with things. We didn't make a ton of adjustments. Just getting a read between the different compounds, trying to understand how to strategize for tomorrow, which you always have to do in qualifying. That was sort of our thought process today.

THE MODERATOR: We'll begin with questions.

Q. A lot of talk about the track having variable levels of grip. Did you find that to be true? Is it an online, offline thing, or even mid corner?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think turn two was like that. Probably the worst corner for it. It seems a bit patchy in turn two. You have some on-and-off grip through the corner that's changing.

In general around the track, it seems a little bit more particular for line and car placement than last year. I think you really have to be on the rubber.

But it's very fast still. It's high grip. I feel like you're tiptoeing a little bit more than last year, but the speed isn't down very much. Maybe half a second slower to what last year's time was, 6/10ths, something like that. It's still pretty quick.

Yeah, a little bit more line precise and specific I'm finding this year.

Q. Away from this race, could you go back and explain what happens a week or so after you win an Indy 500.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, man. We had a great trip. You go to New York. It's a blast. I mean, that race, it's a funny position to be in because it's sort of a thing, and I mean this truthfully, I dread the most. I'm an introverted person. I like my alone time. You get no alone time when you win the Indy 500.

But it is the most incredible experience that you will go through in racing. To win that race, go through all the traditions afterwards, the week that follows it, it's very special. You can feel the significance of what the Indy 500 is. It's a huge impact. It's very noticeable when you win the race.

We had a great time. Got to celebrate it. Got to champion the event. It's really much more than that week afterwards. It's the entire year where you get to celebrate the festivities of what the Indy 500 is, the tradition of the race.

You think about the ticket unveil coming for next year. They're selling 300,000 tickets for this place. It's very special to see the ticket, to be a part of that. It's all the little things.



There's nothing that captivates you like the Indy 500 and the history of it.

Q. The other five gentlemen who won it two years in a row, do you think it's more difficult to win the event these days or was it more difficult for those guys to win it?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, man, that's a good question.

Well, probably subjective, but I mean you could argue both ways is what I would say. You could argue it was easier back then because you typically had bigger advantages on race cars. If you go back to the '60s or '70s, there's people that would win that race by a lap at times. If you had a really good car, you were fast on a particular year, it was really about reliability then. Let's make it 500 miles, if we can repeat that the next year, we bring the same thing, we should be able to do this.

Nowadays, because it is so close and so competitive, it seems harder to get it right year over year, right? But you could also argue that the cars are more reliable, the racing style maybe lends itself to being able to go back to back.

That's a really hard question to answer. I mean, now thinking about it and going through the thought process for you, I think it's difficult throughout the entire history. I really do.

Indy is so tough to get right. I never went to this year's 500 expecting to win it again. I just don't think you ever can. You go there with a tremendous amount of respect for the place. If it works out, it's very gratifying and very special.

That's why you don't see it happen very often back to back because it's so difficult to get that day right. It's the pressure everybody is under the month of May to get it right on the one day. You're there a long time working on the car, trying to get it right. It comes down to one moment. Everyone feels the pressure in that moment to really execute. I think that's why it's hard to nail it every year.

Q. You're now coming to another road course after Road America. How is it coming to yet another road course, albeit different, going back to back? How is your mindset on all this?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it's just the beauty of INDYCAR racing. We're going to different types of tracks very often. It's what makes our sport unique. There are other disciplines of motorsport that race at various types of tracks, but they don't do it in the veracity that INDYCAR does. You're bouncing back and forth between disciplines

week after week.

Obviously this is two back to back on road courses. But there's some differences characteristic-wise. I think there's two of the best we have in North America. Laguna is nice to get right, like Road America is.

I guess what I'm answering is I like the challenge of having to go between all these disciplines. Next we go to Mid-Ohio, Iowa short oval, then a street course after that, Toronto. Is non-stop juggling trying to get all these disciplines correct throughout the year.

Q. Is it nice maybe not to be in such a high-impact media center such as Monterey Peninsula as the Indy 500?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I feel the impact here for sure. We had a lot of fans out here today. It's more so that you're just removed a little bit from the 500, right? Some of the celebration has worn off, which is really nice. We get to just focus back on driving the race car again. That's more what I'm noticing.

Q. A lot of times when you change the date, you think what you're going to get when you get out to the racetrack. Looks like people showed up. As a veteran, is that nice to see?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, this is a real racer's track. I think that's part of the reason people that come out here, they enjoy the history of motorsport, they understand INDYCAR racing really well. It's a legendary track. We all enjoy being here. You're finding a lot of fans. You move the date, they're still going to show up.

We love being out here. It's noticeable that fans like being out here too. Like we talked about before, it's nice to have this break in the middle of the summer, to be honest. The weather is beautiful. It's not a mix-up that I'm mad about.

THE MODERATOR: Best of luck the rest of the way. Thank you.

Now joined by Colton Herta, two-time winner here.

What did you think of the practice session?

COLTON HERTA: It was interesting. Tough. This place is really, really tough. Like Josef said, true driver's track. To get the most out of the car and a lap around here, it takes every bit of skill and focus.

It's a fun place to drive around, for sure.



THE MODERATOR: How has the track changed?

COLTON HERTA: I would say the grip maybe went down a little bit, but it still seems to be there. I think you might have a tiny bit more tire deg, but very minor changes. It seems like the repave has held up nicely over the year. That's good to see that they did a really good job doing it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Colton.

Q. As this is the last race that you're on with the current engine, then Mid-Ohio brings in the start of the hybrid engine, what is the feeling going in towards that? Is it exciting for the driver to be around that technology?

COLTON HERTA: I mean, it's different. It's sad to see that the current formula is going, but it's exciting to see what we're moving to. It's cool. This is all I've known for INDYCAR since I've been a driver in it. The format hasn't changed, nothing's really changed.

It is exciting to have a little bit of a change with the hybrid technology. I know a lot of people are excited about it from the engine manufacturer's side, because it's a new challenge for everybody. And definitely for the driver's side, it seems more challenging, as well.

Q. Does it make things a lot different for you in terms of driving the car?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I think how the regen has an effect on the balance of the race car under braking, under lifting, will change. It will change throughout a stint. It's going to be a little bit different.

I don't think you'll see like a massive shake-up sort of thing. I think you will see maybe some guys take a little bit longer, or rather teams taking a little bit longer getting the setup right. It might change some things slightly.

I know from the driving side, it will make it a lot busier inside the car and a lot more stuff to do for us.

Q. Temperature is pretty cold today. Do you need to be careful about the tires for these conditions?

COLTON HERTA: No. Temperature is cold, but the track temperature is actually quite high. 120 degrees. Very high and very normal track temp that you would see if it was 80 or 90 degrees out.

I don't think the temperature is affecting too much at the moment.

Q. There was a bit of discussion on the broadcast about the corkscrew. How do you personally approach the corkscrew as a corner?

COLTON HERTA: I mean, it's difficult. The hardest part about it is before the corkscrew even happens, the braking. You're braking from left to right, so you're off-loading the side of the car, making it light, so it's more susceptible to locking. You're braking from left to right over a crest, which kind of entices to have rear locking.

As soon as you turn in, you tend to have a lot of understeer until you kind of get into the camber of the corner. It really grips up and kind of pulls the car around. Then you just kind of hope you're set the right way.

I know a lot of people talk about, like, looking at the trees and stuff. I think that's better for lower-category cars, but we're just going too fast to have any sight line through there.

It's really about repetition and understanding where you need to place the car and how it needs to look to get through the corkscrew.

Q. Where you sit in the championship, how do you reflect on the last few rounds? Is it frustration with some of the results?

COLTON HERTA: It's frustrating, the last couple results. But the pace has been terrific the last three weekends. Really all year, but specifically the last three weekends. Again, we're off to a good start with second here. Still a lot of the weekend left to do.

It's promising going into this weekend. We've won here twice. We've had good race cars. We were looking at a podium last year until the gearbox broke. This is a place that we've done really good at in the past, and I hope we can kind of continue that into the future.

Q. Obviously it's a different time of year to last year. Do you think that's going to make any difference to the performance and drivability of the car over the weekend?

COLTON HERTA: I'd say typically. But it's a pretty cool weekend this weekend. It's not going to get too hot. I don't think it will look too different to what we have weather-wise later in the year. Maybe cloud cover is a little bit less at this time of year. Overall temperature seems similar.

I don't expect weather to play too much of a role this weekend.



THE MODERATOR: Good start to the weekend. Good luck tomorrow and on Sunday.

COLTON HERTA: Thank you.

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